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THE
HERCULANEAN
AND
POMPEIAN MANUSCRIPTS.

1800.



TO THE

PRINCE.

TO THE
PRINCE

SIR,

IT is with the most humble Sense of Duty, and Respect, that I solicit the Honour of being permitted to lay before Your ROYAL HIGHNESS the Detail of a few Pages, which embrace, in a short and summary Account, the whole Object of your very important Design. May Your ROYAL HIGHNESS deign to accept this Paper, as the first Fruits of the Mission, to which You have been most

most graciously pleased to appoint me, and as a tributary Pledge of the Zeal and Affiduity, with which I shall never cease to be actuated, in obeying Your Commands, while I endeavour to merit in some Degree this distinguished Mark of your Patronage, in employing my utmost Abilities for the Accomplishment of a Design, not only originating from your own Judgment and Intuition, but in its Execution involving the Honour of Your ROYAL HIGHNESS, as well as the Interests of Learning, and the Hopes of the Learned.

The numerous Settlements of the Greeks in Italy, received the Name of Magna Græcia, because their Mother
Country.

Country was of a Size considerably less than that, in which they were planted: Among these were nearly all the Cities in the Province of Campania, including Naples, the Capital of His Sicilian Majesty, and also Herculaneum, and Pompeii, which are supposed to boast a Foundation, coeval with Hercules himself, Three Thousand and Fifty Years ago, or Twelve Hundred and Fifty Years before the Christian Æra. This Province, more than any other Part of Magna Græcia, was always celebrated for the studious and successful Cultivation of the Arts and Sciences. The two Cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii ranked next to that of Naples in every Respect, as Places of considerable Note; they had their public

public Theatres, with every other Attendant, of great Population, Splendor, Opulence, and general Prosperity. These, in common with all the rest of Campania, became the elegant and favourite Resort of the Romans, for the different Purposes of Health, Luxury, Repose, and Erudition.

*In the ninth Year of Nero's Reign, these two Cities experienced a most formidable Shock from an Earthquake, which overthrew a great Part of them. Nor had they recovered altogether from the Effects of this Calamity by their own Exertions, and the Aid of Impe-

* U. C. 816.

A. D. 63.

Caius Memmius Regulus	} Consuls.
Lucius Virginus Rufus	

Imperial Munificence, when a second Calamity, of a different Nature, but equally unexpected, consigned them both at once to the most complete Oblivion. *This Calamity was the great Eruption of Vesuvius, which happened on the 24th Day of August, two full Months from the Accession of the Emperor, Titus Vespasian. Herculaneum was buried under a Mass of Lava, and Volcanic Matter, to the Depth of Twenty-four Feet. Pompeii, being more distant from the Mountain, was overwhelmed principally with a Shower of Ashes, nor in any Place more than half the Depth

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of

* U. C. 832.

A. D. 79.

Flavius Vespasianus 9	} Consuls.
Titus Vespasianus 8	

of the other City. But the Fate of both was sudden, and inevitable; and yet it appears, that almost all of the Inhabitants, and what is an equally surprising Circumstance, more of the Herculaneans than the Pompeians escaped. By the few Skeletons which have been found in either Place, the Relation of Dio Cassius, who states the Destruction of the People, while assembled at the Theatre, is proved to be totally erroneous. It may be proper to remark, that before this Eruption, the whole of Vesuvius was in a State of Cultivation and Fertility, from the Top to the Bottom, and though the Form, and Soil of the Mountain in one particular Spot seemed to denote the Traces of some former

former Exploſion, yet, no extant Memorial of any Kind had recorded it.

Neither of theſe two Cities was diſcovered again, 'till a long Period of Sixteen Hundred and Thirty-four Years had elapſed. It was in the Year 1713, that ſome Labourers, in ſinking a Well, ſtruck their Tools againſt a Statue, which was on a Bench in the Theatre of Herculaneum. Forty Years afterwards, Pompeii was excavated with much leſs Difficulty, as the incumbent Stratum was neither ſo hard, nor ſo deep as that of the former City.

The Number of the Manuſcripts ſaved from both thoſe Cities, is ſaid to be about Five Hundred; but if I am

rightly informed by those, whose official Situation must give them a competent Knowledge of the Subject, Your ROYAL HIGHNESS, by facilitating the Developement of these Volumes, will probably be the Means of further Excavation, and of rescuing from their Interment an infinite Quantity of others. About Thirty Years ago, His Sicilian Majesty ordered the Development, the Transcription, and the printing of the Volumes, which had then been saved, to be undertaken. This Operation was accordingly begun, and has never been discontinued, 'till the late Invasion of the French. But it's Mode, however excellent, was extremely slow ; it has been performed by a single Person with a single Frame only,

only, under the Direction of the Marquis del Vasto, Chamberlain to the King, and President of the Royal Academy.

The Frame consists of several taper and oblong Pieces of Wood, with parallel Threads of Silk, that run on each Side, the Length of each Piece: when the Frame is laid on any Volume, each Piece of Wood must be fixed precisely over each Line of the Page, while the respective Threads, being worked beneath each Line, and assisted by the corresponding Piece of Wood above, raise the Line upwards, and disclose the Characters to View.*

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* From the Want of Information in this Country, I am apprehensive this Description of the Frame is rather

The Operation seems ingenious, and well adapted to the Purpose; it was, I believe, invented by a Capuchin, at Naples. The Fruits of it are said to be two Publications only, one on Music, by the celebrated Philodemus, who was a Cotemporary of Cicero; and the other on Cookery. The first is in His Majesty's Library, at the Queen's Palace. Through the obliging Politeness of Mr. Barnard, the King's Librarian, I have had the Advantage of perusing it. Indeed, I hope Your ROYAL HIGHNESS will not disapprove my acknowledgment-

rather defective. But, when I am on the Spot, I shall not fail to transmit for Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's Inspection, an exact Model of its Mechanism. I am equally apprehensive that the same Cause may have occasioned more Errors in this Part of my Account: the same local Advantage, of which I shall be careful to make the earliest Use, will enable me to remove them.

knowledging in this Place, the very warm and respectful Interest, which both this Gentleman, and the * Right Honourable the President of the Royal Society, have expressed for the Furtherance of Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's great and good Design. Meanwhile, by this Specimen of Philodemus, I am convinced, that if the Frames should be multiplied to the proposed Extent, several Pages of Thirty different Manuscripts might be disclosed, and

* It was suggested by Sir Joseph Banks, that from the Nature of the ancient Atramentum, which perhaps was not so much an Ink as a Paint, and from the Materials of these Manuscripts, there may be derived a Chance of applying a Chymical Process to this Development of the Cinders, with increased Expedition and Effect. The Suggestion is of the first Importance; hereafter there may be an Opportunity of ascertaining its Utility by Experiment.

and transcribed within the Space of one Week.

But the very Period, at which the Manuscripts were buried, serve to point out to Your ROYAL HIGHNESS, that you may expect the Recovery of either the Whole, or, at least, Parts of the best Writers in Antiquity, hitherto deemed irrecoverable. All of these, in Truth, had written before that Period, if we except Tacitus, whose inestimable Works were unfortunately not composed till Twenty Years afterwards, during the Reign of Trajan.

Nor can it be imagined for a Moment, that among Five or Six Hundred Manuscripts, already excavated,
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and especially from the numberless ones, which further Excavations may supply, lost at such a Period in Two of the most capital Cities, in the richest, most frequented, and most learned Province of Italy, each of them an established Seat of the Arts and Sciences, each of them the Resort of the most distinguished Romans, not any Part of those illustrious Authors should be discovered.

But the Manuscript of Philodemus itself, makes the Reverse of such an Idea appear much more probable. To the Moderns, who have

“ Untwisted all the Chains that tie

“ The hidden Soul of Harmony,”

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his

his Treatise on Music cannot indeed be supposed to communicate much Information; yet the Subject is scientific, and scientifically treated. The Author himself, too, was one of the most eminent Men, in his Time, for Wit, Learning, and Philosophy. But in the rest of the Arts* and Sciences, in History, in Poetry, the Discovery of any lost Writer, either in Whole or in Part, would be deemed a most valuable Acquisition, and Treasure, and form a new *Æra* in Literature.

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* Particularly the ancient Mode of cementing in Architecture, and on Proportions in Sculpture and Painting.

It is extremely fortunate that the Character[†] of these Manuscripts, whether they should be Greek, or Latin, must be very obvious and legible. Before the Year of our Lord, 79, and some Time after it, the Majusculæ or Unciales Litteræ, Capital Letters, were solely used. A Page, therefore, in one of these Manuscripts, would present to Your ROYAL HIGHNESS an exact Image of some mutilated Inscription in those Languages, on an ancient Column, Statue, or Sepulchre.

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† One of the principal Difficulties in copying these Manuscripts, appears to consist in supplying the proper Letters or Words at the different Chasms.

There cannot remain a Doubt, even omitting the Assurances from Men of official Situation to that Effect, that Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's Superintendent will receive every possible Assistance from the Marquis del Vasto; and in that Case it seems improbable that the Object of this Mission can be altogether fruitless.

With such a Termination of it, however, Your ROYAL HIGHNESS, by having proposed to concur with His Sicilian Majesty in the quicker and more effectual Developement, Transcription, and Publication of these Manuscripts, will reap the Satisfaction of having made a most princely Attempt
in

in Behalf of Knowledge and Literature, on an Occasion, where their Interests might be affected most materially, and in a Manner, of which no Annals have afforded, or can hereafter afford an Example. Your very Interposition will be Your Glory: Your Want of Success will only make the learned World feel with Gratitude, what You would have done.

This imperfect Narrative seemed the only Method in my Power of submitting to Your ROYAL HIGHNESS a Sketch of those Facts, which have given Rise to the present Mission; and I shall esteem myself highly honoured,
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if Your ROYAL HIGHNESS shall graciously condescend to accept it.

Permit me

To subscribe myself,

SIR,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most dutiful, obliged,

And devoted Servant,

JOHN HAYTER.

MARCH 20th, 1800.



